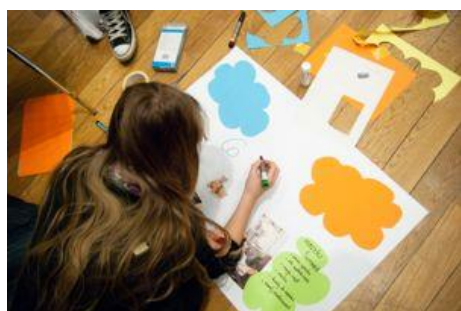




“Let’s Talk About Refugees” program supports schools in conducting respectful discussions on refugee crisis and helps students in gaining credible knowledge about the migration patterns. It provides teachers with professional development offer that gives them confidence needed to initiate and facilitate learning around this controversial issue.

The influx of refugees from the Middle East and Africa to Europe has become one of the most important topics of public debate in Poland in late 2015 (during the parliamentary elections) and still remains an important issue in European as well as Polish politics. The crisis became the top story in the media and raised public activism of both supporters and opponents of reception of the refugees. In most cases discussions about migrations led to polarization of the opinions and mutual exclusion of those who do not share the same perspective.

CCE believes everyone has a right to participate in what we think should be a respectful conversation about the challenges our societies face – to speak their minds and be heard. Schools have particularly important role to play in this case – they can and should facilitate discussions among students in order to allow them to learn, share their views on the subject and demonstrate how to discuss controversial issues in a respectful way.



“Let’s Talk About Refugees” promotes a discussion which is based on mutual respect between the participants and respect for those we speak about, it concentrates on attentive listening. We not only ask young people to share their opinions but to speak of the values they consider important when thinking of the refugee crisis. We believe that a discussion which brings young people back to their values gives an opportunity to find a common ground between those who disagree. We stress the importance of understanding others’ point of view instead of persuading them to share our opinion.

The program has been launched by the Center for Citizenship Education (CCE) in Autumn 2015 and is now supported by the number of other institutions (among others Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). More than 300 teachers have participated in the program over the last year and more will be invited to join in the upcoming semester.

The program offers professional support to teachers who find it challenging to teach about migrations and engage in an open conversation with their students. The support is offered in a form of a four-months long blended-learning course which allows participants to acquire knowledge about migrations and to learn methodologies of controversial issues discussion. During face-to-face training teachers get to discuss the issue themselves and meet refugees who share their stories. Experienced teachers offer participants guidance on-line and feedback on their practice.

CCE has created a number of quality teaching resources about refugees to support the process. They are published online (at migracje.ceo.org.pl) and distributed to schools.



We believe that learning to understand each other when we speak of refugees will make it easier for us to discuss other controversial issues and will help us concentrate in what unites us as society.



Points of View. Good Conversation Clubs

Project Summary

The project "Points of View. Good Conversation Clubs" is part of a broader initiative launched by [Center for Citizenship Education](#) (Poland) called "Let's Talk about Refugees" ("[Rozmawiamy o uchodźcach](#)"). The overall goal of the project is to encourage and facilitate respectful discussions on current migrations and refugees' issues among pupils in schools and within local communities. The project will offer support in this matter for teachers and youth leaders in Poland, creating space for such discussions through Good Conversation Clubs and other educational tools.

Good Conversation Clubs

Students supported by a teacher set up Good Conversation Clubs at schools and within local communities. This is an activity which uses project-based methodology where pupils organize meetings and local campaigns within Good Conversation Clubs encouraging their peers to involve in respectful conversations on global issues related to migration. Young people are developing their knowledge and skills related to critical thinking and they are invited to share their own points of view and to skillfully argue their positions.

Context of introducing the project "Points of View. Good Conversation Clubs":

CCE believes everyone has a right to participate in what we think should be a respectful conversation about the challenges our societies face – to speak their minds and be heard. Schools have particularly important role to play in this case – they can and should facilitate discussions among students in order to allow them to learn, share their views on the subject and demonstrate how to discuss controversial issues in a respectful way.

The project "Points of View. Good Conversation Clubs" within the broader idea of "Let's Talk About Refugees" promotes a discussion which is based on mutual respect between the participants and respect for those we speak about, it concentrates on attentive listening. We not only ask young people to share their opinions but to speak of the values they consider important when thinking of the refugee crisis. We believe that a discussion which brings young people back to their values gives an opportunity to find a common ground between those who disagree. We stress the importance of understanding others' point of view instead of persuading them to share our opinion. This is what are Good Conversation Clubs brought to life for.

The program "Let's Talk About Refugees" has been launched by the Center for Citizenship Education (CCE) in Autumn 2015 and is now supported by the number of other institutions (among others Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). CCE has created a number of quality teaching resources about refugees to support the process. They are published online (at migracje.ceo.org.pl) and distributed to schools. More than 500 teachers have already participated in the program (blended-learning courses combined with stationary workshops) over the last two years more than 3500 received educational materials as a methodological support in their everyday work.

More information: www.migracje.ceo.org.pl, www.ceo.org.pl

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10 TIPS ON HOW TO TALK ABOUT REFUGEES? (and to listen to each other)?

The topic of Poland's acceptance of Syrian refugees and refugees revealed how it is difficult to have a good conversation. Both supporters and opponents of their reception direct their arguments to people who think similar to them.

It is often a matter of demonstrating one's own positions and emphasising how they are very different from those of the 'other side'. Instead of looking for common points participants in the discussions insult each other. How, then, can we talk in order to bring us closer together than further away?

1. SPEAK TO THE MAJORITY, NOT JUST TO THE CONVINCED

If you do not want to be heard only by people who are already convinced, try to speak to the majority. Use language that does not exacerbates divisions. Look for arguments that refer to what you have in common. Try to understand the arguments, do not give up on them in advance. Believe in good will of all interlocutors. It is not worthwhile to speak point-blank, reducing the conversation to the question 'yes or no for the reception of refugees? You will involve your interlocutors more, if you think with them together, what should be the rules and procedures of proper reception of the refugees, how integration should look like, how to counteract difficulties of those processes.

2. RESPECT THE PEOPLE YOU TALK TO AND THOSE YOU TALK ABOUT

Show your interlocutors that you respect them. Smile, show that you are listening to them, do not interrupt them - let others express their opinions, and then they will also allow you to express your opinions. Try to appreciate the arguments put forward by others - it is rare that someone is completely wrong. Try to find something in your interlocutor's statement that you agree with. There are many sensible arguments for accepting those fleeing war, but also for

well-founded concerns. By understanding the opinions and emotions of others you will make them more inclined to listen to you.

Remember to always speak respectfully, even about those who are not present. Whether or not you agree to invite refugees to Poland, this conversation concerns people. Speak about them without insulting words.

3. BE HONEST

Do you like others imposing their opinions on you? Do not do this, then, when you present your point to others. Do not use only information supporting your position, and when searching for facts and data, try to find the most reliable source of information. If they differ from source to source, speak about it, show the differences and think about where they come from. Do not hide your lack of knowledge on a given subject - we all have it. By presenting the facts honestly, you will gain the trust of listeners who will see that you are not trying to deceive them. Leave the assessment of the facts to the audience without imposing your interpretation. When you make your statement, use the phrases 'I think it', 'I think it is'. Everyone has the right to express their opinion, and others do not have to.

4. THINK WHERE YOUR BELIEFS COME FROM

When you express your opinion on a subject, ask yourself why you think so. What are the reasons for these beliefs? When asking yourself such questions, think about the values that are important to you. Perhaps your family is particularly affected and this affects your point of view on the refugees' reception? Or maybe your religion or tradition is more important and they determine your view of the world? By explaining where your beliefs come from, you will take away the reasons for personal attacks from your interlocutors and show that your position is not rigid, but refers to the values close to your heart. Look for solutions that take into account as much as possible the values of your interlocutors. It may turn out that there are more possible solutions to this situation than you thought.

5. TALK ABOUT CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

There are no solutions that can be used anywhere, anytime. There are no arguments to convince everyone. When you talk about solutions, explain what you mean in concrete terms. Integration models that work in Germany may not work in Poland and vice versa. On the other hand, social problems that affect Western countries do not necessarily have to work in Polish reality. It is worth citing solutions that have proved their worth in other countries, however, it should not be assumed in advance that they can be applied in Poland.



6. DO NOT JUST FOCUS ON THE FACTS

Do you sometimes have the impression that your interlocutors do not accept factual arguments? Do you think that the data you are presenting prove that you are right, but others do not understand? Remember that facts can be interpreted differently. Do not start by proving to others that they are under-informed or using inappropriate sources of information. In this way, you will make them stop listening to you right away. If you do not agree with someone, encourage them to express their opinion and try to understand the beliefs and values behind them.

7. ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THERE MAY BE CONCERNS ABOUT MIGRATION.

Share your reflections and concerns on migration and listen to others - migration is about opportunities as well as challenges, e.g. social, cultural, economic. Look at different aspects of them, talk about them, search for information. If your interlocutors have different views from you, think about it and openly name those which are relevant. By accepting the arguments of the other side, you will show that you are not criticising everything they say, therefore it will be easier for them to listen to your opinion.

8. DO NOT GENERALISE AND DO NOT USE STEREOTYPES.

If your view is based on your values and is supported by arguments, you do not have to use stereotypes and generalizations. Have you ever been told 'Muslims do not respect women' or 'refugees are violent'? Such statements are not true. They treat the whole group as if they were one person. In order to avoid stereotypes in your statements, it is important to express yourself precisely. Talk about specific behaviours or phenomena (e.g. instead of 'Poles are intolerant', you can say 'In recent weeks there have been acts in Poland motivated by intolerance').

9. BE ATTENTIVE TO THE HATE SPEECH

Hate speech is what spreads or justifies hatred. When you hear them, react. Express your objection - say that you do not agree with such a language and content. React especially when this is how people from your circle speak. The fact that you like or share a common interest does not mean that you have to nod at them when they say racist things. Give an example that we can also speak respectfully about people with whom we do not agree.

10. DO NOT TREAT ALL THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH YOU AS YOUR ENEMIES

Interlocutors may have different views, which does not mean that they cannot discuss with each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Do not condemn those who disagree with you.

If you see that someone is not able to put arguments in words or is unconsciously using terms that are considered racist, react. You may say that you are sorry to hear such opinions or phrases. Remember that people do not always have experience of diversity and they may be not able to talk about it, which does not mean that they are racists. It is worth considering how to express one's opinion without judging.

The advice given above is based on a text by Antoni Strzemieczny. The text is available on the following website: www.migracje.ceo.org.pl and has been modified for the purposes of this publication

More information: www.migracje.ceo.org.pl, www.ceo.org.pl

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